

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
SHORE FIRE CONTROL PARTY FEASIBILITY STUDY
MARINE CORPS BASE, CAMP LEJEUNE
Onslow County, North Carolina

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations § 1500-1508) implementing procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune and Atlantic Fleet give notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) have been prepared for the Shore Fire Control Party Feasibility Study at MCB Camp Lejeune, Onslow County, North Carolina.

The Proposed Action is to conduct a one-day Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP) Feasibility Study at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune (hereinafter "Camp Lejeune"), North Carolina. This study would be conducted in two phases: Phase I - firing inert (non-explosive rounds, which are actually concrete); and Phase II - live (high explosive) naval gunfire (NGF) rounds into the G-10 Impact Area at Camp Lejeune. This phased approach would allow Naval gunners the opportunity to more accurately refine the computer firing solutions and mitigate the risk of targeting error when using live rounds. The proposed Feasibility Study would occur no earlier than mid October 2001.

The purpose of the proposed study is to determine whether Camp Lejeune is suitable to accommodate SFCP training, which involves NGF, on a routine basis. Therefore, it is the only alternative site for such training addressed in this EA. The study is one step towards fulfilling a need to evaluate alternative East Coast locations for conducting this training. SFCP training is presently limited to Vieques Island, Puerto Rico and San Clemente Island, California.

Marine Corps operations and training personnel reviewed Camp Lejeune's training areas using existing weapons safety footprints and initially concluded that four areas had the potential to accommodate the non-explosive and/or live NGF rounds necessary for the SFCP Feasibility Study. However, upon further study, Marine Corps personnel found that the Greater Sandy Run Area, the K-2 Impact Area, and the N-1/BT-3 Impact Area on Brown's Island were not feasible alternatives. The G-10 Impact Area can accommodate both inert and live ordnance and is the proposed location for the SFCP Feasibility Study.

The No Action Alternative would impair the USMC's ability to train Atlantic Fleet forces in the Atlantic Fleet operational area (Section 5063 Title 10 USC) and would impair the integration of SFCP and naval ship crew training, so that Navy and Marine personnel can train together.

The potential for NGF noise to affect marine mammals and the potential for ship collisions with marine mammals will be minimal. The evaluation considered measurements and studies conducted over the past 20 years and criteria and thresholds for injury and harassment of marine mammals and other protected marine species from impulsive noise developed by the Navy in support of the *Seawolf* Shock Test Final Environmental Impact Statement (1998). With the mitigation measures proposed, the potential for injury or harassment under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, or 'takes' of endangered marine mammals and sea turtles, is negligible and there will be no effect.

The Feasibility Study may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the red-cockaded woodpecker and rough-leaved loosestrife, both of which are Federally listed endangered species. Impacts to protected species are highly unlikely due to the short duration and limited intensity of